

JOE McGRATH

Dublin, Ireland.

Born : "Near Dublin", Ireland 1870/71

Died : Monday July 10th 1911 at his Dublin home, after illness of about a year, aged 40

Height : 5ft. 2.3/4 inches

Irish 7stone 12lbs (110lbs) to 8 stone (112lbs) Limit "Bantamweight" Class Champion 1890 to 1897, retired as undefeated Champion – due to bad eyesight.

"Backer" 1. Lewis Smith (Dublin) a "Book-maker" (turf accountant)

Note after retirement from boxing McGrath worked as Lewis Smith clerk and between them they visited every race track of any importance in Ireland.

2. Dave Holland for Dec.28 1892 World title bout –v- Billy Plimmer.

Record extremely difficult to compile with true accuracy – due to lack of boxing coverage of many of his bouts – so must rely heavily on claimed record, as given at various stages of his career.

Claimed to have commenced career in 1889.

Last traced bout January 1899

After retirement besides being a turf accountants clerk, also acted as a boxer, trainer, second, manager, promoter and "Master of Ceremonies" at various times. *Note* Often credited with discovering, training then guiding the Heavyweight "Sailor" Tom Sharkey born Dundalk, Ireland raised in San Francisco prior to joining the U.S.Navy – but this doesn't stand up to scrutiny – with Sharkey having started boxing navy while based in Honolulu in 1893 prior to returning to California and with no record of McGrath having ever had an extended stay in California – and returning to Ireland. 1895-96 period (Sharkey did visit Ireland in July 1897 in August.)

This record researched and compiled by Aylesham, Kent Boxing Historian – Harold Alderman

HAJ Strong, all-action style who relied on his aggression to overwhelm his opponents, durable with respected punch

1889 ?

Apr. - Bob Otway - Dublin WP4

Jun - Owen Mooney-Dublin WKO5
1st. series 8st.4lb competition

Jun - Tom Walker - Dublin WKO7
Semi-final 8st.4lb competition

Jun - Fred Barr - Dublin WRSF2
Won final 8st.4lb competition

Note It was stated in later years that Peter Jackson (Australia) the famous negro heavyweight had run this competition – but, he, Jackson was in America from August 1888 to Aug. 19th 1889 – and arrived in London in September 1889 making his Dublin debut on Dec.23 1889 and was back in Brooklyn by Jan. 27 1890 staying to August 1890 then returning to Australia then back to USA in 1891.

1890

May - Jack Hackett – Dublin WP12
(won Irish 7st.8lb (106lbs) to 7st.10lb (108lb) class "Bantamweight" Title.

- Jack Hackett - Dublin WKO8(12)
(defense Irish 7-8(108lb) to 7-10(110lb)
class, in Bantam division title)

- Jack Grey (Shoreditch, London) –
Dublin WRSF5

Note Grey's surname also
misprinted as "Guy"

1891

Feb.12 – Alf Gunning (Walworth,
London) – Dublin

DREW 15(12)

Note After the scheduled 12 rounds
judges Charlie Mitchell and "a man from Dublin"
couldn't split them, so referee, Frank Slavin
(Australia) ordered two extra rounds, after which
judges still couldn't split them, Slavin then stated
"six more rounds would be fought in order to find a
winner "but after one more round the 15th, the

JOE McGRATH

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1891 cont'd

police stopped the bout – where-on – Frank Slavin give out that “decision was a Draw”, “Greatest bout ever seen in Dublin”.

Aug.22 - Williamson(Hounsdlitch

London - Dublin WKO5(10)

Note Williamson at 10st.5lb (145lbs)

was 2 stone (28lbs) heavier than McGrath

8 st.5lbs(117lbs) – much later it was given out

that McGraths opponent was Jack Grey

(Shoreditch) but, believe this was mistake.

Sep.5 – Sporting Life – challenged by Bill Moore (Kingsland) £25 or £50 a side at 7st.12lb (110lbs) in London or Ireland.

Proposed bout with “Young” Fullerton (Belfast) Cancelled.

1892

Apr.25 “Sporting Life” challenged World at 7st.9lb.(107lbs) to 7st.10lb(108lbs).

Apr.26 Above accepted by Jack Grey (Shoreditch)

Apr.29 – Alf Buckingham(Bloomsbury, London)-Dublin WKO17(20)

Note result also given as WKO16 –

Buckingham a substitute for Alf Sparrow (Walworth, London).

Jul.16 – Bill Abbott (London) – The Curragh Army Camp, Corkindale, County Kildare WKO1

Note first bout of Irish tour by McGrath (and Peter Maher) travelling with Ginnetts Circus and taking on all comers.

- Tom Vance(Belfast) WRet2

Note above also thought to be part of this Irish tour

Sept.2 – Along with Peter Maher, McGrath sailed for New York on “The City of Berlin”

Nov.28 – Bout on this date v Danny McBride in Brooklyn at The Coney Island A.C. – Cancelled.

Dec.28 – Billy Plimmer (Birmingham, England) – Brooklyn, New York The Coney Island A.C.

LRSF8(“to a finish”)

Billed World’s 7st.10. (108lbs) to 7st.12lbs (110lbs) class of Bantamweight division title for purse of \$2,500 (£500) \$500 (£100) to loser.

Referee Johnny Eckhardt, both men weighed 7st.12lbs (110lbs) seconds for McGrath, who’s first loss this was, were Peter Maher and Martin Murphy for Plimmer Charlie Norton and Benny Murphy – McGraths “Backer” Dave Holland.

Note following above McGrath went on tour of U.S.A. with Billy Plimmers troupe, “taking on all comers”

Note North American record not traced but claimed North American record – given in “Mirror of Life” February 11 1896 (no dates or years given) – given below (on presumption that Plimmer bout was his U.S. debut, all listed after December 1892.

Between Jan. 1st 1893 to end of 1895.

“Professor” Jack Lynch – Philadelphia WP4

Joe Patton - New York W 3

Dave Conner - New Jersey WP4

James Gallagher - Philadelphia W 3

Dan Leary -“- WP4

Barney Reiley -“- WP4

Jack Sheehan -McKeeSport W 3

Pete O’Shea - Chicago W 3

Note O’Shea known as “The Pacific Cyclone”

Jimmy Casey - Memphis W 3

Friday Clark - Indianapolis W 3

Jack Kelly - Albany W 2

Charley Brennan - Troy WP4

Johnny Lavack - Pittsburg W 3

Note Lavack called “Ohio State Champion”

Jack Hanley - New York W 3

Charley McCarthy -“- W 3

Mick Collins -“- WP4

Dec.1893 –(Adolph)”Dolly” Lyons

- New York – Stopped Police 1

Note also given as Lyons won-1 but no actual decision given due to police stopping bout stated to be at Miners Bowery Theatre, Brooklyn with below bout being on following day (all part of Billy Plimmers troupe taking on all comers tour) which was at this venue from December 4th to December 9th 1893 (according to “Sportsman” of Dec.2 1893)

Dec.1893–Pat Daly–Brooklyn, New York W3

Note Daly, London born, New York raised, who returned to London to live in 1894 –always disputed above claiming that he KO’ed McGrath in 2 rounds but McGrath adamant that he won the bout, a argument that went on for several years with letters to the Sporting Press from both men.

1893

Dec.13 Exhibition with Billy Plimmer on this date at Williamsburg – prevented by police.

1894

Feb.6 Jimmy Barry (Chicago)-Chicago, Illinois LKO3

Note McGrath in later years disputed this ending stating it was a Exh bout (see 1897 Oct.13)

1893-1895

John Frizer	- New York	W 3
Savelle	- -	W 2
Hugh Lyons	- Washington	W 2
Billy Ryan	- Albany	W 2
"Kid" McCoy	- Indianapolis	W 1
Patrick Johnson (a negro)	- Washington	W 2
Jim McCarthy	- Buffalo	W 3
Denny Lyons	- Cincinnati	W 2
King Tutty	- Covington	W 3
Frank Macciswiski	- Cincinnati	W 3

Note this bout not given in Feb 1896 claimed US record – but later stated to have taken place during above period may be below bout, with verdict disputed (especially if "no decision" bout).

Frank Macciswiski	- Cincinnati	WP4
Frank Macciswiski	- Cincinnati	W 3
Pete Manning	- Cleveland	W 2
John Perue (a negro)	- Cleveland	W 3
George Day (a negro)	- Cleveland	W
Teddy Glynn	- Pittsburg	W 1
Frank Burke	- Philadelphia	WP4
John Sheridan	- Philadelphia	W 2

Returned to Ireland and give up boxing due to bad eye sight

1896 No record traced

Feb 1 – Mirror of Life – pen picture & record given (is one above)

Note although acting at various times during year as a "M.C." second and manager was always called "The Irish" 7st.12lbs (110lbs) to 8 st. (112lbs) class Champion in the Bantamweight division.

1897

St.David's Day

Mar.1 – Mick Crotty (Cratty also given) –
Limerick WKO14(20)

Billed "Irish" "7st.12lb to 8st" class title in Bantam division)

Note result also given as WKO15 with no weights given – Crotty "The Irish Cyclone" just back from U.S.A., bout also stated to be at both 8st.2lb(114lb) limit and 8st.4lbs(116lbs) limit.

Mar.3 – "Mirror of Life" carried record of Joe McGrath, no dates, years or venue, same as Feb. 1 1896.

Oct.13 "Sporting Life" – Joe McGrath contradicted statement that he lost in 3 rounds to Jim Barry (Chicago) – McGrath stated – "that they only met once and that was in Chicago in 1894 in a Exhibition bout with no referee and no decision given.

Oct.15 – "Sporting Life" letter from Jim Barry (Chicago) stating "that to prove he had beaten Joe McGrath – he Barry, had written to the following asking them to write to the "Sporting Life" giving the facts of his Barry's bout with Joe McGrath in Chicago, Mr Sheridan of "The Chicago Tribune" Mr. Smith of "The Times and Weekly" and Mr. Donovan of "The Daily News".

Note No record of any of above writing to "Sporting Life" in support of Jim Barry's statement.

Nov.24th "Mirror of Life" letter stating Barry v McGrath bout was at "Hippodrome Theatre" Chicago and the police stopped it in Barry's favour in first round – but then allowed them to "spar" two more rounds.

Dec.29 "Mirror of Life" McGrath wrote stating Barry bout was an Exhibition of 3 rounds and was at The Empire Theatre, Chicago not The Hippodrome.

From Mirror-of-Life Jan 5 1898 as "recently"

Dec. - Dave McDonagh-Belfast-Mechanics
Theatre DREW10

Note Joe McGrath promoted this show – Mirror of Life report just gives it as over ten rounds with 4oz gloves – stating that McDonough who was cut in 4th looked to have won. But in later years it was given that bout was over 20 rounds with McGrath successfully defending his Irish title with the drawn decision.

1898

Mar.2 issue "Mirror of Life" stated that Joe McGrath after agreeing to meet William Vardy, now refused to box him ("Vardy will box anyone in Ireland at 8st.4lbs(116lbs))

1899

Jan.25 "Mirror of Life"

Jan - Dan McVeigh – Belfast Albany Club
(Low Blow) Ldisq5

Note Bout was "to a finish" over two minute rounds report stated "McGrath unlucky to lose". Last bout traced.

Jul.11 – "Sporting Life" McGrath living at 38 South William Street, Dublin – "now manager of Jim Lee (Dublin) claimant to Irish 7st.8lbs (106lbs) to 7st.10lb (108lb) class in "Bantamweight" division.